

2 maintaining a database of personal information relating
3 to a consumer, the personal information having been
4 previously provided by the consumer and including consumer-
5 identified preferred providers;

6 receiving a request initiated by [a] the consumer and
7 transmitted over a global communication network to a system[,
8 said request having a domain name associated with a plurality
9 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name
10 element, said domain name identifying goods/services without
11 identifying a specific provider thereof];

12 selecting, responsive to the received request initiated
13 by the consumer and based upon the personal information
14 relating to thereto in the database, at least one name of at
15 least one provider; and

16 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at
17 least one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein
18 said consumer [chooses] is subsequently capable of choosing
19 a provider from the selected at least one provider to
20 communicate therewith.

1 2. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said
2 request initiated by the consumer includes a domain name
3 associated with a plurality of domain names each of which
4 includes a common domain name element, said domain name

5 identifying goods/services without identifying a specific
6 provider thereof, said common domain name element [can be
7 represented as] is in the form INEEDSUBJECT.XXX, where
8 "SUBJECT" is a consumer-selected subject matter object and
9 "XXX" is a consumer-selected, top-level extension of the
10 domain name.

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1 8. (Amended) The method of Claim 1, [further comprising
2 the step of storing, within said system, information
3 associated with said consumer including] wherein said
4 consumer-provided personal information relating to the
5 consumer includes personal preferences, payment instructions
6 and privacy instructions.

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1 10. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 1, wherein [said
2 step of operating further includes the step of] said personal
3 information relating to the consumer includes privacy
4 instructions submitted by the consumer, and the method
5 further comprises enabling [said] the consumer to [identify]
6 purchase the goods or services offered by said [chosen] at
7 least one provider chosen by the consumer, the purchase being
8 in accordance with the privacy instructions submitted by said
9 consumer [and stored within said system].

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1 12. (Amended) The method of Claim [9] 1, wherein said
2 step of operating further includes the step of enabling said
3 consumer to purchase the goods or services of the chosen
4 BS provider in accordance with payment instructions submitted
5 E by said consumer and stored within said [system] database.

1 14. (Amended) The method of Claim [13] 8, wherein said
2 payment instructions include instructions to complete
3 B6 transactions using a card number of the system and rebill
4 E said consumer for said complete transactions.

1 Art 37 18. (Twice amended) A system comprising:
2 a database for storing consumer-provided information
3 B7 associated with a consumer, the information including
4 consumer-identified preferred providers; and
5 a server for receiving a request initiated by said
6 consumer and transmitted over a global communication
7 network[, said request including a domain name associated
8 with a plurality of domain names each of which includes a
9 common domain name element], said server further including:
10 a [name linking] module for selecting, responsive
11 to the received request and based upon said information
12 associated with said consumer and stored in the

13 database, at least one name of at least one provider;
14 and

15 a controller for forwarding the selected at least
16 one name of the at least one provider to said consumer,
17 wherein said consumer [chooses] is then capable of
18 choosing a provider from the selected at least one
19 provider to communicate and, optionally, complete a
20 business transaction therewith.

1 20. (Amended) The system of Claim 18, wherein said
2 request includes a domain name associated with a plurality
3 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name
4 element, and said common domain name element [can be] is
5 represented as INEEDSUBJECT.XXX, where "SUBJECT" is a subject
6 matter object and "XXX" is a top-level extension for the
7 domain name.

1 21. (Amended) The system of Claim 18, wherein said [name
2 linking] module is operable to select the at least one name
3 of the at least one provider using one or a combination of
4 subject matter information, demographic information and
5 geographic information associated with said consumer and
6 stored in said database.

25. (Twice amended) A method for providing a consumer with a customized presentation containing the names of various providers of goods and services that are selected [according to a name linking policy], said method comprising the steps of:

storing, within an intermediary system, consumer-provided information associated with said consumer, the information including consumer-identified preferred providers;

receiving a request initiated by said consumer and transmitted over a global communication network to said intermediary system[, said request including a domain name associated with a plurality of domain names each of which includes a common domain name element];

selecting, responsive to the received request and based upon said information associated with said consumer and stored in said intermediary system, at least one name of at least one provider [using said name linking policy of said intermediary system];

forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least one provider within [said] a customized presentation to said consumer, wherein said consumer [chooses] is then capable of choosing a provider from the selected at least one

24 provider to communicate and, optionally, transact business
25 therewith; and
26 operating, within said intermediary system, as an
27 intermediary between said consumer and said chosen provider.

1 26. (Amended) The method of Claim [20] 25, where said
2 step of operating further includes the steps of:

3 enabling said consumer to identify the goods or services
4 offered by said chosen provider in accordance with privacy
5 instructions submitted by said consumer and stored within
6 said intermediary system;

7 enabling said consumer to select for purchase said goods
8 or services of said chosen provider using one or more
9 criteria for same; and

10 enabling said consumer to purchase said goods or
11 services of the chosen provider in accordance with payment
12 instructions submitted by said consumer and stored within
13 said intermediary system.

1 Please add the following new claims 37-72.

2 37. (New) A method, comprising the steps of:
3 maintaining a database of personal information relating
4 to a consumer,

5 receiving a search request initiated by the consumer
6 over a global communications network, the request identifying
7 a type of goods or services;

8 identifying one or more providers of the type of goods
9 or services requested;

10 presenting the one or more providers to the consumer;
11 and

12 enabling the consumer to complete a transaction with a
13 provider from the one or more providers chosen by the
14 consumer using the personal information in the database.

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2 38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the personal
3 information in the database relating to the consumer
comprises payment instructions provided by the consumer.

1 39. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the personal
2 information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises consumer-provided credit card information of a
4 credit card account of the consumer.

1 40. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the personal
2 information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises a consumer-provided instruction that transactions
4 are to be completed without using payment information

5 relating to the consumer, and that the consumer is to be
6 billed for the transactions separately.

1 41. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the personal
2 information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises a consumer-provided instruction that the identity
4 of the consumer is not to be communicated with the chosen
5 provider in completing the transaction.

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1 42. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the step of
2 identifying comprises identifying the one or more providers
3 based upon the personal information in the database relating
4 to the consumer.

1 43. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the personal
2 information relating to the consumer includes a name of one
3 or more providers with which the consumer prefers to transact
4 business.

1 44. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the personal
2 information relating to the consumer includes one of
3 demographic information and geographic information associated
4 with the consumer.

1 *Sub 67* 45. (New) An apparatus for facilitating a transaction
2 between a consumer and a provider of goods or services over
3 communications network, the apparatus being adapted to:

4 maintain a database of personal information relating to
5 a consumer;

6 receive a search request initiated by the consumer over
7 a global communications network, the request identifying a
8 type of goods or services;

9 identify one or more providers of the type of goods or
10 services requested;
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11 present the one or more providers to the consumer; and

12 enable the consumer to complete a transaction with a
13 provider from the one or more providers chosen by the
14 consumer using the personal information in the database.

1 46. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the
2 personal information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises payment instructions provided by the consumer.

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1 47. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the
2 personal information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises consumer-provided credit card information of a
4 credit card account of the consumer.
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6 48. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the
7 personal information in the database relating to the consumer
8 comprises a consumer-provided instruction that transactions
9 are to be completed without using payment information
10 relating to the consumer, and that the consumer is to be
11 billed for the transactions separately.

1 49. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the
2 personal information in the database relating to the consumer
3 comprises a consumer-provided instruction that the identity
4 of the consumer is not to be communicated with the chosen
5 provider in completing the transaction.

1 50. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the
2 identifying comprises identifying the one or more providers
3 based upon the personal information in the database relating
4 to the consumer.

1 51. (New) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the
2 personal information relating to the consumer includes a
3 consumer-provided name of one or more providers with which
4 the consumer prefers to transact business.

1 52. (New) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the
2 personal information relating to the consumer includes one
3 of demographic information and geographic information of the
4 consumer.

1 53. (New) A method comprising the steps of:
2 maintaining a database of personal information relating
3 to a consumer;

4 receiving a request initiated by the consumer and
5 transmitted over a global communication network to a system,
6 said request having a domain name associated with a plurality
7 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name
8 element, said domain name identifying goods/services without
9 identifying a specific provider thereof;

10 selecting, responsive to the received request initiated
11 by the consumer and based upon the personal information
12 relating to thereto in the database, at least one name of at
13 least one provider; and

14 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at
15 least one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein
16 said consumer is subsequently capable of choosing a provider
17 from the selected at least one provider to communicate
18 therewith.
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1 54. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein the said
2 common domain name element is in the form INEEDSUBJECT.XXX,
3 where "SUBJECT" is a consumer-selected subject matter object
4 and "XXX" is a consumer-selected, top-level extension of the
5 domain name.

1 55. (New) The method of claim 53, wherein said step of
2 selecting further includes the step of using a name linking
3 policy to select the at least one name of the at least one
4 provider while utilizing one or a combination of subject
5 matter information, demographic information and geographic
6 information maintained in the database of personal
7 information.

1 56. (New) The method of Claim 53, wherein said personal
2 information includes one or more of personal preferences of
3 the consumer towards providers of goods/services, payment
4 instructions and privacy instructions.

1 57. (New) The method of Claim 56, wherein said privacy
2 instructions includes instructions to make information,
3 alternatively, freely available, available only when
4 authorized by said consumer, or never available to the chosen

5 provider or third parties.

1 58. (New) The method of Claim 56, wherein said payment
2 instructions includes instructions to complete transactions
3 for said consumer in an anonymous manner.

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1 59. (New) The method of Claim 56, wherein said payment
2 instructions include instructions to complete transactions
3 using a card number of the system and to rebill said consumer
4 BT for said complete transactions.

1 60. (New) The method of Claim 56, wherein said payment
2 instructions include instructions to complete transactions
3 according to a predetermined payment arrangement with said
4 chosen provider.

1 JUE 87 61. (New) A system comprising:
2 a database for storing information associated with a
3 consumer;
4 a server for receiving a request initiated by said
5 consumer and transmitted over a global communication network,
6 said request including a domain name associated with a

7 plurality of domain names each of which includes a common
8 domain name element, said domain name identifying
9 goods/services without identifying a specific provider
10 thereof, said server further including:

11 a module for selecting, responsive to the received
12 request and based upon the personal information relating to
13 the consumer in the database, at least one name of at least
14 one provider; and

15 a controller for forwarding the selected at least
16 one name of the at least one provider to said consumer,
17 wherein said consumer is thereafter enabled to choose a
18 provider from the selected at least one provider to
19 communicate and selectively complete a transaction therewith.

1 62. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein the said
2 common domain name element is in the form INEEDSUBJECT.XXX,
3 where "SUBJECT" is a consumer-selected subject matter object
4 and "XXX" is a consumer-selected, top-level extension of the
5 domain name.

1 63. (New) The system of claim 61, wherein said module
2 includes a name linking policy to select the at least one
3 name of the at least one provider while utilizing one or a
4 combination of subject matter information, demographic
5 information and geographic information maintained in the
6 database of personal information.

1 64. (New) The system of claim 61, wherein said personal
2 information includes one or more of personal preferences of
3 the consumer towards providers of goods/services, payment
4 instructions and privacy instructions.

1 65. (New) The system of claim 64, wherein said privacy
2 instructions includes instructions to make information,
3 alternatively, freely available, available only when
4 authorized by said consumer, or never available to the chosen
5 provider or third parties.

1 66. (New) The system of claim 64, wherein said payment
2 instructions includes instructions to complete transactions
3 for said consumer in an anonymous manner.

1 67. (New) The system of claim 64, wherein said payment
2 instructions include instructions to complete transactions
3 using a card number of the system and to rebill said consumer
4 for said complete transactions.

1 68. (New) The system of claim 64, wherein said payment
2 instructions include instructions to complete transactions
3 according to a predetermined payment arrangement with said
4 chosen provider.

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1 69. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of
2 receiving receives the request from any one of the following:
3 a desktop device capable of communicating information, and
4 a hand-held device capable of communicating information.

1 70. (New) The system of claim 18, wherein the server is
2 capable of receiving the request from any of the following:
3 a desktop device capable of communicating information, and
4 a hand-held device capable of communicating information.

1 71. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the step of
2 receiving receives the request from any one of the following: